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TRYING TO "SWIPE"

A RUSSIAN SUB IS JUST PART OF THE CIA SAGA—

Among U. S. successes: the U-2 spy venture, a tunnel into East Berlin, a tap on Kremlin phones. Now: the daring effort to recover a sunken sub, its nuclear missiles, secret codes.

When the Central Intelligence Agency went fishing in the ocean depths for a sunken Soviet submarine and its nuclear missiles, it was not the first time that millions of dollars had been spent on such a bizarre operation.

While the whole story has not been told, this much of it has come to the surface:

In 1968, a diesel-powered Russian submarine, armed with three nuclear missiles, went to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean 750 miles northwest of Hawaii, in about 17,000 feet of water. American detection devices were able to pinpoint the sub's exact location.

In 1970, the CIA—with the backing of President Nixon—began an operation code-named "Project Jennifer" aimed at raising the pieces of the submarine, its missiles, coding machines and other secret equipment.

The operation involved the design and construction of a special ship, the *Glomar Explorer*, with derricks and claws to lift objects of great weight and size from the ocean floor.

Last summer, during a period when the Pacific was most calm, the operation was successfully carried out—at least in part. About one third of the submarine was raised. What it contained—aside from the bodies of an undisclosed number of Russian submariners—is still a deep secret, but there are indications that the CIA is not displeased with the results of the recovery operation.

Past successes. CIA officials say that fewer such secret operations of the "Project Jennifer" type are now being conducted. But what has come to light in the past indicates the scope of undercover projects. Among them:

- The U-2 spy plane especially designed for the CIA to fly at very high altitudes and to take detailed photos of the ground. From 1956 to May, 1960—when Francis Gary Powers was shot down over Russia—this aircraft photographed strategic targets across the Soviet Union, particularly sites of long-range

missiles. It has been considered a remarkable technological and intelligence achievement.

- The Berlin tunnel that the CIA constructed in the 1950s. It ran from a mock "experimental radar station" in West Berlin under the border into East Berlin. There, wiretaps were hooked up to the communications lines into the Soviet military headquarters, and military traffic was recorded. The Russians discovered the tunnel in April, 1956.

- The secret speech that Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev delivered in 1956 to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. It was an attack on Stalinism, marking a critical switch in Soviet policy. The CIA mounted a massive operation to obtain a copy—reportedly succeeding by paying a large sum to a Communist official. The U. S. was thus able to base policy decisions on knowledge of the unpublicized shift inside the Kremlin.

- A tap of Kremlin phones. In 1960, millions of dollars were spent by the CIA to build a 600-foot radar tower to eavesdrop on Kremlin telephone conversations. It was a technical failure. But the operation was carried out by a "ferret" satellite that picked up, recorded and relayed back to U. S. ground stations telephone conversations between the Kremlin and Soviet leaders riding in their limousines.

- The case of the stolen urine. The CIA goes to considerable length to prepare actuarial studies on key international figures. To get a reading on the health of one leader, they had a urine sample stolen from a Vienna hospital where he was under treatment.

Another triumph of the CIA, possibly in collaboration with Britain's MI-6, was the recruitment in the 1950s

of Col. Oleg Penkovsky, an important officer at the very center of the Soviet military establishment.

For a number of years, until he was arrested near the end of 1962, Penkovsky supplied the CIA with thousands of secret documents dealing with Soviet missile development and deployment, and other military matters.

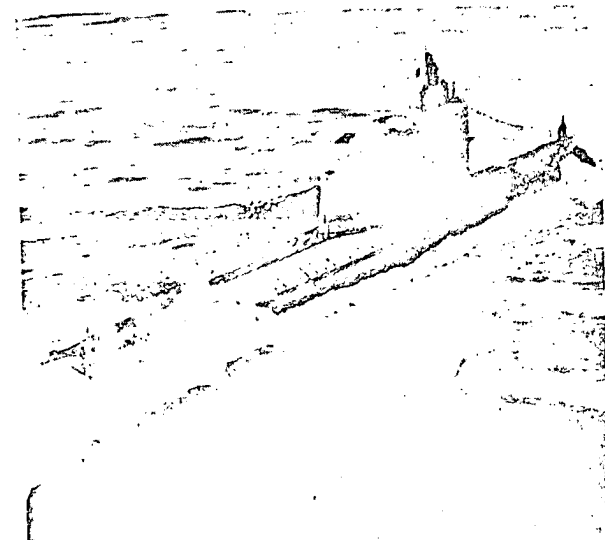
To grasp the full significance of this coup, says one U. S. official, imagine a trusted colonel in a key position with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon who works as an active spy and passes on to the Russians every significant document that crosses his desk.

Role of technology. Important as such operations might be, however, they are far less vital in the gathering of intelligence than the coding activities of the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Md., and the photographs and radio-monitoring reports of the U. S. "spy" satellites.

In fact, most of the nation's intelligence-gathering has for some time been done through technology. Expensive satellites are sent into orbits over

Type of Russian submarine involved in "Project Jennifer" was diesel-driven and armed with three missiles.

U.S. NAVY





Special barge under tow (above) was designed to carry the Soviet submarine after the *Glomar Explorer* (right) had raised the vessel from the floor of the ocean.

Russia, Communist China and other countries, to pick up military and other intelligence information. Among them:

- "Big Bird" has been orbiting since 1971. It scans broad land areas with a wide-angle camera, and radios what it sees back to ground stations. A giant narrow-angle camera is trained on targets of special interest to take close-up pictures.

- "Project 647" surveillance satellites sweep around the earth in 20,000-mile-high orbits. On board are sensors to detect nuclear blasts and rocket firings, and long-range television cameras to flash instant pictures back to U. S. intelligence centers.

- Another type of satellite monitors military and other electronic communications, storing the information in a memory bank for eventual transmission to a ground station.

Aircraft, flying drones and ocean-going ships jammed with electronic equipment are also used to monitor other countries' communications.

But the great bulk of technical intelligence is gathered on the ground. On every continent, "listening posts" manned by National Security Agency experts record radio broadcasts, Morse-code transmissions and even television broadcasts. All of this information, in time, finds its way back to CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., across the Potomac from the nation's capital.

Cost—and criticism. At the CIA headquarters, "Project Jennifer" must rank as one of the most successful "cover stories" ever conceived.

The operation to latch on to a Russian submarine and the secrets it carried is estimated to have cost more than 250 million dollars.

Much of the money went into the construction of the *Glomar Explorer* by



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a firm connected with industrialist Howard Hughes. A similar vessel, the *Glomar Challenger*, had already established itself as the most advanced deep-sea research vessel in operation.

For two years, while the *Explorer* was being constructed and tested, the story made public was that it was destined for the deep-sea mining of manganese nodules. The story may, in fact, have spawned a whole new industry, since at least two dozen companies have formed well-financed joint ventures to get into mining operations on the ocean floor. There is evidence that the ship, besides being used for the submarine-lifting operation, has also been deployed on at least one manganese-nodule expedition.

Trouble for CIA? The publication of details concerning the "Project Jennifer" operation, coming atop executive and congressional investigations of past CIA activities, could spell further trouble for the agency.

Some of the questions that are currently being raised:

- Was the multimillion-dollar expense really justified—or was it a blunder that brought little in return?

- Should the CIA have jumped into an operation that, if it became public knowledge, might damage the delicate

state of détente being nurtured between the U. S. and Russia?

- Will it bring even more pressure for congressional control of the agency's operations—to the possible detriment of morale within the organization?

CIA sources assert that the project closely paralleled the U-2 operation in technique and success. "Think of what the U-2 launched in terms of intelligence coverage," said an official. "The submarine-salvage ship now also opens a whole new field of technology."

Silence in Kremlin. As for Russian reaction, there was no word from the Kremlin in the first days of the story's unfolding. Officials doubted that détente was in danger.

On the question of morale, recent criticism of CIA actions has made it a major concern. But officials are certain that the CIA will survive, that the various investigators will come around to the view that the agency is essential, and that a compromise will be reached between the need for controls on the CIA and the need for secrecy.

In the meantime, as long as powerful world powers try to maintain closed societies, there will be more operations of the "Project Jennifer" type.

Many you may never read about.